

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY



EMPLOYEE BULLETIN

EB No. 1205

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CIA COMPLAINT TO THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

1. In late September an Employee Bulletin published the text of a statement issued to the press by the Office of Public Affairs in response to a two-part investigative report aired by ABC News on 19 and 20 September 1984. At the time of the broadcasts, I felt a personal sense of outrage, as each of you must have, that a responsible news network would air unsubstantiated and totally false allegations that the CIA planned or threatened the murder of two U.S. citizens and had engaged in numerous other activities "in direct violation of U.S. law." The ABC broadcasts were replete with these and other false, even ludicrous, statements.

2. On 21 November, after unsuccessful attempts to obtain appropriate redress from ABC, we filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), charging ABC with deliberate news distortion and violations of the Fairness Doctrine. Our complaint charges that the ABC story was distorted, that it unfairly ignored conflicting evidence, and that it amounted to a personal attack upon the Agency, which triggers an obligation to permit the attacked group to respond.

3. While there has been some criticism of our action in the press concerning the capacity of an aggrieved governmental organization from seeking redress before another government agency, I believe this issue has been disposed of by the Chairman of the FCC, who in a letter to the New York Times had this to say about the propriety of our action:

"Without going into the merits, the C.I.A.'s complaint raises a 'fairness doctrine' claim, a related personal-attack issue and an allegation of news distortion.

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